

ROTARY DISTRICT 6450 REACHES OUT FOR BATON ROUGE AREA HIT BY MAJOR FLOODING

(The following information has been reviewed and approved by District Governor, Herb Schmidt)

Fellow Rotarians,

After the first responders handle the emergency and remove people from harms way, Rotary does what it does best, step in to help and rebuild. THE BATON ROUGE AREA in Louisiana needs our help.

This Rotarian's family is fortunate to have the ability to live in the travel trailer in the driveway and will be living there for quite some time as the rebuilding effort takes place. Many other families are not as fortunate. As the media moved on to covering the election and the long road to recovery started, many residents are wondering if the assistance they need will ever come. "The attitude changed," said Tyrone Trent, who has been staying at the Baton Rouge River Center with his wife, Donna Miles, since it opened last month. Their rental home off of Winbourne Avenue in Baton Rouge flooded. "When people did things for you in the beginning, it was 'We want to help.' Now, it's changed. We didn't ask to be homeless."

The Problem

In August, unprecedented rains hit large portions of Southern Louisiana causing flooding in areas that have not experienced flooding in anyone's lifetime. The area was not prepared. Schools, churches, community centers and homes all are affected and in need of repair. Recent estimates of damaged buildings run as high as 160,000 structures. Very few homeowners carried flood insurance and many cannot afford to do so.

FEMA does provide some assistance in situations like this. However, large numbers of families have either not suffered enough structural damage to qualify for FEMA assistance or the terms of the assistance require future financial burden that they cannot bear. FEMA will be of no help at all to a large percentage of those in need.

What we are doing about it

Our task force is acting as the coordination point for the group of 29 Northern Rotary Districts who are coming together to bring the power of Rotary to bear on this situation. We need your help in communicating and coordinating your District's or Club's assistance in this effort.

The Louisiana members of our task force have engaged in a needs assessment. They are asking us to work on providing building materials, appliances and furniture. In addition to raising funds, we are seeking a few significant suppliers to work with to provide what is needed, preferably companies who are capable of making items available at local distributions points in the Baton Rouge, LA area.

They need our help

We will need significant financial support to acquire building materials, appliances and furniture. To get the ball rolling, we are asking each of the over 2,000 clubs in the Districts covered by our task force to consider donating \$1,000 or more to the cause. It will be a powerful statement to the suppliers that we approach demonstrating Rotary's commitment to making a difference. For those of you that have made a donation, we thank you for your prompt response.

Funds are being gathered at the Hinsdale Rotary Foundation:

Rotary Club of Hinsdale Foundation
PO Box 395
Hinsdale, IL 60522-0395

Please make sure that any funds sent clearly indicate which Club or District they are from and that they are for the Louisiana Flood Relief Project.

We are also asking you to exercise your powerful network of fellow Rotarians, friends and business associates to identify contacts at companies that manufacture or distribute building materials, appliances or furniture that may have a distribution capability in the affected areas.

As we learn more and the scope of the project is further refined, we will be in communication with you. We look forward to your prompt support in communicating with your clubs and members and mobilizing the significant resources of Rotary to help those in need.

In summary, we need:

-) Your help in communicating the need;
-) Your financial support;
-) Your help in making the right contact with the right suppliers of building materials, appliances and furniture.

Sincerely,
Louisiana Flood Relief Task Force
Glenn Olson (member of Rotary Club of Darien Illinois)
glennolsen@earthlink.net / 630.776.5186
Brian Andersen
brian@brianandersen.net / 630.330.1492

Mailing Address:
Rotary Club of Darien Illinois
PO Box 423
Westmont, IL 60559